

It happens I was the Democratic speaker that evening, and I had the inexpressible joy of sitting next to Miss Rogers at the head table in my white tie and tails. I took the liberty of expounding, as best I was able, Professor Joseph Reed's theory of the dramatic import of Miss Rogers' abrupt decision to dance with Astaire on that lovely day they were caught in the raid in Regents Park. She confided to me that she had to slip off to dance, that night, with Geyelin. She returned to pronounce him divine!

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the above cited article be reprinted in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the article was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 28, 1995]

WHEN I DANCED WITH GINGER ROGERS

(By Philip Geyelin)

That was a nice piece Tom Shales wrote about Ginger Rogers [Style, April 26]. He had it just right, except maybe the part about how she made it look effortless but "not for a minute did it look easy." I would have put it the other way around: It wasn't exactly effortless for me when I danced with Ginger Rogers, but she certainly made it look easy.

You heard me: When I danced with Ginger Rogers, I am not dreaming this up. Rather, I'm setting out to describe the realization of a dream of, oh, let's say close to a half-century. From the first time I saw a Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers movie, I had nurtured the fantasy. And then, unbelievably, there I was 14 years ago standing on stage with Ginger, before an audience of more than 600 swells, waiting for the beat that would send us gliding off to the music of "Isn't This a Lovely Day."

It was March 28, 1981, at the spring dinner of what The Post's Style section describes with relentless redundancy as the "exclusive Gridiron Club." By "swells" I mean that when you peer across the footlights on these occasions, you dimly see a head table that starts with the president and the vice president and their wives, most of the Cabinet, maybe three justices of the Supreme Court, the Joint Chiefs and a gaggle of ambassadors. The ballroom is wall-to-wall governors, members of Congress, CEOs, TV talking heads, other assorted celebrities and the publishers and editors of the newspapers whose Washington correspondent make up the Gridiron Club's membership.

So much for the setting. A dance story should be taken step by step. It was the first year of Ronald Reagan's presidency. A Hollywood touch was in order. An invitation was extended to Ms. Rogers through the good offices of Godfrey "Budge" Sperling Jr. of the Christian Science Monitor. She not only accepted but agreed in principle, to a surprise appearance on stage. In my capacity that year as music chairman (producer), I was in a position to claim the right to be Ms. Rogers' partner if there was to be any dancing. I did so at the cost of what may be the earliest onset of stage fright ever experienced by anybody.

The plot was that Ms. Rogers, who was seated at the head table, would actually proceed directly backstage and appear in the opening number of the show, which, in another bow to the Gipper, was to the tune of "Hooray for Hollywood." The cue for her to step from the wings would be the line: "Hooray for Fred Astaire—Miss Ginger Rogers made him walk on air"—whereupon there she would be, the real thing, at the micro-

phone, singing a satiric put-down of the Gridirons: "Isn't this a lovely way, to be meeting the press . . .?"

Not bad, showbizwise, wouldn't you say—for amateurs? With only mild trepidation, I called Ms. Rogers. I told her my name was of French origin. She said her favorite husband was French. It was going well. Then I got to the part of the briefing that had to do with "Hooray for Fred Astaire," and the stories that she didn't much like running as an entry turned out to have some truth to them. "Let's stop right there," she said. While I was mumbling my confusion she cut in to make her meaning clear. "If you were Abbott," she asked, "would you want people to be always asking, 'How's Costello'?" The mention of Astaire, I said quickly, will be excised.

She arrived in Washington the Friday night before the dinner, and on Saturday I sent flowers to her room, thinking that to be the Hollywood way, with the lyric tucked in among them. At an appointed hour we met, and she handed me the lyric with some pencil editing. Recklessly, I questioned whether her changes would scan, noting modestly that, while I was tone deaf and usually urged when singing as a member of the chorus not to get too close to the microphone, I did have some experience as a lyric writer.

"Honey," Ms. Rogers replied gently, with no hint of any awareness of what that salutation meant to me, "I've been singing that song longer than you've been writing lyrics for the Gridiron Club."

With only three hours to go before curtain, we repaired to the empty ballroom, where a piano player and the club's dance director put us briefly through what were, mercifully, pretty elementary paces. We parted to change for dinner, she to a ball gown, me to—you guessed it—white tie and tails.

We met again backstage and warmed up with a few practice twirls. Her introduction went precisely as planned; the song was a smash. We were perfectly poised to begin the dance, but somehow, with a full orchestra, the bar of music that was our cue didn't come through. I froze. Now, I'm not saying Ms. Rogers also missed it. But she knew what to do. Stepping to the mike, she said: "Let's try that again—We only had 20 minutes to rehearse."

The second effort was—how shall I put it?—pretty close to perfection, or at least relatively close. Things are relative when you have been contemplating the real possibility of stumbling off stage into the orchestra pit and taking Ginger Rogers with you.

My sigh of relief, however, was cut short. Ms. Rogers, was back at the microphone. "Let's see," she was saying, "if this guy can do it one more time." I did, or I should say that we did. She was then 69, but to dance with she was going on twenty-something, and she made it easy—so much so that when she graciously consented to stay over for the usual Sunday afternoon reprise of the Saturday night show, it was becoming very nearly effortless.

A few years later, she sent a message saying she was writing her memoirs and would appreciate a memorandum on some of the details of that night at the Gridiron. Ignoring my effusions on what the evening had meant to me, she wrote in her book that the dance "had brought the house down but not because of me; the audience couldn't get over Mr. Geyelin's dancing."

A classy dividend, I thought, from a classy lady who made the lifelong dream of an ink-stained wretch come true.

#### CARTNEY KOCH MCRAVEN

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I was saddened to learn the news last night

that rescue workers in Oklahoma City discovered the body of Cartney Koch McRaven amid the rubble that once was the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

Cartney Koch McRaven was one American—not ordinary—extraordinary.

Cartney graduated from Spearfish High School in 1993. She enlisted in the Air Force, whose members believe that the protection of freedom is the highest, most important public service. With devotion and honor she served her country. Her action was a tribute to the core values that make this country great.

Cartney was only 19 years old. Newly married on April 15 to Shane McRaven, a fellow airman in the U.S. Air Force. She was stationed at Tinker Air Force Base. She had traveled to the Murrah Federal Building to register her new name on Federal documents. A new name. A new husband. About to start a new life. A life that will never be. A life cut short by the savagery of domestic terrorism. By murderers who kill their fellow citizens.

Cartney had a beautiful life ahead of her. On behalf of the people of South Dakota, my wife Harriet and I extend our condolences to Cartney's family, friends, and loved ones.

For Cartney and the other victims of the Oklahoma City tragedy, we must not let our commitment to freedom waiver. These cowards will be brought to justice. She and the others tragically killed in Oklahoma will not have died in vain.

#### RALPH NEAS—THE 101ST SENATOR FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, later this month, Ralph Neas will step down from his position as executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, after 14 years of extraordinary service as a champion of the basic rights of all Americans.

For nearly half a century, the Leadership Conference has been the Nation's conscience in meeting the fundamental challenge of protecting the civil rights of all of us. Ralph Neas joined the Leadership Conference in 1981, following 8 years of outstanding service to the Senate on the staffs of our former colleagues, Senators Edward Brooke and David Durenberger.

During Ralph's tenure, the Leadership Conference fought some of its most difficult battles, and achieved some of its most important victories. Time and again, when the forces of reaction sought to turn back the clock on civil rights, Ralph Neas rallied the coalition, and civil rights prevailed.

When the Reagan administration sought to block extension of the Voting Rights Act, Ralph Neas helped to put together a broad bipartisan majority in Congress to renew it.